

Message Text

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72

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /151 W

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R 011522Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6224

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10573

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, KS, VT

SUBJECT: STATUS OF BISHOP CHI

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SEOUL 4920

1. DURING AUGUST 1 CONVERSATION WITH VATICAN DESK OFFICER FOR KOREA, IT WAS QUITE APPARENT THAT VATICAN ANGUSHING DEEPLY OVER HOW TO HANDLE CASE OF BISHOP CHI. PRO-NUNCIO DOSSENA MANAGED OBTAIN GROK AGREEMENT TO POSTPONE CHI'S TRIAL FROM JULY 26 TO AUGUST 1 BUT EFFORTS AT FURTHER POSTPONEMENT HAVE PROVEN INEFFECTUAL. DOSSENA AND VATICAN ARE CONVINCED THAT BISHOP CHI, WHO WELL KNOWN FOR HIS "EXCESSIVE ZEAL," IS DETERMINED TO MAKE A MARTYR OF HIMSELF IN HOPE OF CALLING ATTENTION TO ABRIDGEMENT OF CIVIL LIBERTIES IN SOUTH KOREA AND, IDEALLY, MAKING SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THIER IMPROVEMENT. TO ADD TO DILEMMA, SOURCE SAID, IT WOULD BE POINTLESS TO CALL CHI TO ROME FOR CONSULTATIONS SINCE HE HAD JUST BEEN HERE WHERE EVERYONE, INCLUDING POPE PAUL, GAVE HIM STRONG ADVICE AGAINST INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZED POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND, MOREOVER, RECOMMENDED HE NOT RETURN HOME AT LEAST UNTIL PRESENT SERIES OF POLITICAL

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TRIALS HAD ENDED. ADDITIONALLY, VATICAN SEES NO LEGITIMATE

GROUND'S FOR REMOVING BISHOP CHI FROM HIS DIOCESE SINCE HE HAS NOT COMMITTED ANY MORAL OR DOCTRINAL ABUSES WHICH, UNDER CANON LAW, ARE ONLY REASONS FOR SUSPENSION OF A BISHOP.

2. VATICAN KEENLY AWARE DEVISIVE NATURE OF CHI AFFAIR GENERALLY FOR CHURCH IN SOUTH KOREA. ALTHOUGH VATICAN INFORMED OF MANY BISHOPS AND CARDINAL KIM'S SEEMINGLY STRONG SUPPORT FOR BISHOP CHI, SOURCE SAID THERE IS STRONG SUSPICION HERE THAT MAJORITY OF KOREAN CLERGY DO NOT FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT STANDING BY BISHOP CHI. VATICAN BELIEVES THAT WHILE CATHOLIC LAITY AND CLERGY MAY FEEL BISHOP CHI ATTACKING GENUINE INJUSTICES IN KOREA WHICH ALL RIGHT-THINKING MEN WOULD LIKE TO SEE RECTIFIED, BHEY CANNOT, HOWEVER, SUPPORT HIS METHODS WHEN THEY KNOW THEY COULD DO IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO CATHOLIC CHURCH. IN RECENT MEETING, PRESIDENT PARK HAS ASSUMED CARDINAL KIM THAT A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF CHI CASE COULD BE FOUND; THEN CHI'S JULY 23 "STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE" UPSET ALL PROGRESS THAT CARDINAL AND NUNCIO HAD MADE.

3. VATICAN HAS NOT BEEN IN CONTACT WITH KOREAN EMBASSY TO HOLY SEE, AND IN FACT SOURCE ASKED IF WE KNEW WHETHER AMBASSADOR HAS YET RETURNED TO POST. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELIGIOUS LEADERS, ARRESTS, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME10573
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740211-0606
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740882/aaaacsjs.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: SEOUL 4920
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS OF BISHOP CHI CINCPAC FOR POLAD
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, KS, VT, (CHI HAK-SON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005